Introduction

Jacob Høigilt and Gunvor Mejdell

Arabs engage in writing and reading as never before, whether on screen or on paper. As more and more ‘ordinary’ people take possession of the written language, questions arise about what this process does to the Arabic language system, which is characterised by ‘diglossia’, and if and how writing practices are implicated in social and political relations in the Arab world. The essays in this book all address these questions. They are the result of a research project – Language Change in the Arab World – that has gathered sociolinguists in three workshops to explore the extent and implications of mass writing in Arabic.¹ In particular, we have focused on the emergent trend of writing in the vernacular variety in Egypt and Morocco, two of the most populous Arab countries (88 and 33 million inhabitants, respectively).

Contemporary mass writing in Arabic is undoubtedly connected to the marked increase in literacy across the Arab world as well as the rise of digital technology. Upwards of 3.5 million 15 to 24-year-olds were illiterate in Egypt in 1975, but today, the figure has sunk to about one million, while the population has grown quickly in the same period. In Morocco, the corresponding figures were about 2.4 million in 1975 and only 300,000 illiterate in 2015 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2015). While mass literacy has provided people with the means of writing, the explosive increase in social media usage has provided the opportunity. Ordinary people produce an enormous amount of writing each day on Facebook, Twitter, blogs and in comment fields of various new outlets across the Arab world. More traditional forms of writing have also blossomed, however, both in the digital and the analog domains. Online, the experiment *Wikipedia Maṣrī* has been going on since 2008. A subsidiary of the Wikipedia family, this is an electronic encyclopedia written in the Egyptian dialect. It currently (January 2017) contains 16,211 entries.² Also newspapers, magazines and books proliferate to a degree never seen before in many Arab countries. The mushrooming of newspapers, publishing houses and literary works in Egypt following the Egyptian revolution in 2011 was an accentuation of an already existing trend.

1 The Language Change in the Arab World research project (2012–2016) was generously funded by the Norwegian Research Council (project no. 213473).

2 Wikipedia Maṣrī is found at https://arz.wikipedia.org/wiki/الصفحة_الرئيسية.

As a wide variety of people write for an equally wide variety of purposes, how is their writing connected to social and political realities? The sociolinguistics of writing in the Arab world should merit serious attention, yet little scholarly work has been done on the connections between written Arabic and society. Not that Arabic is an exception: Sociolinguistics as a field has devoted the lion's share of its attention to spoken language. Theresa Lillis observes that the sociolinguistics of writing is an "emergent and highly contested" field (Lillis 2013:15). However, Coulmas expresses a growing sense of the importance of the written word when he argues that "writing constitutes a part of a society's communication apparatus that is not derived from speech and cannot be replaced by speech. It is a social practice and a mode of communication in its own right" (Coulmas 2013:10).

The aim of this book is twofold. We analyse the practices and perceptions of writing in vernacular Arabic, and we try to make sense of how the choice of language variety is connected to social and political dynamics in the Arab world. To this end we concentrate on three areas of inquiry – 'diglossia', language ideology and the relation between writing practices, social change and power. We approach these questions using a set of qualitative and quantitative methods that are integrated throughout the contributions.

Some contemporary assessments of written Arabic tend to be quite pessimistic. A 2007 report notes that young people in the Arab world seem to "eschew reading and writing" (UNESCO and Qatar Foundation 2007:13). The Arab Human Development Report series speaks of an Arabic language in 'crisis', noting the low production of books and the deterioration of everyday written language skills (UNDP 2003:77, 122–126). Such assessments often take a dim view of writing in dialect. To the extent that the AHDR considers dialectal writing at all it seems to view it as a vehicle of linguistic and social fragmentation, a phenomenon it claims is encouraged by 'Information Age Orientalists' (ibid., 126).

However, a growing body of scholarship about contemporary written dialect is more upbeat about the issue and notes an increased usage of it online and in magazines, newspapers and literature, first and foremost in Egypt. As Doss and Davies show in a recent historical anthology of Egyptian texts written in dialect, the practice has existed for centuries (Doss and Davies 2013). Fahmy documents the importance of writing in Egyptian dialect for the emergence of Egyptian nationalism in the early 20th century (Fahmy 2011). Nevertheless, it has always remained a marginal practice, and with the advent of the Arab renaissance in the 20th century and the importance of pan-Arab ideology it became even more marginalised, as shown by Mejdell's and Brustad's chapters in this volume. But recent years have seen an upsurge in writ-

ten *‘āmmiyya* in the public sphere. Doss and Mejdell note that *‘āmmiyya* is being used quite widely in Egypt in advertisements, popular magazines, short stories, novels and poetry (Doss 2006:57–62; Mejdell 2006). Walters (Walters 2003:101) and Elinson (Elinson 2012) observe a similar development in Tunisia and Morocco, respectively. In Egypt this development is reflected in the publishing industry, which was revitalised well before the 2011 revolution. New publishing houses have brought unconventional authors onto the literary scene, and the established publisher Dār al-Shurūq has followed suit. There has been a dramatic increase of literature in *‘āmmiyya* or a blend of *‘āmmiyya* and *fuṣḥā* in recent years, exemplified in bestsellers such as *‘Ayza atgawwiz* (I want to marry) by Ghāda ‘Abd al-‘Āl (Abd al-Al 2008). Noting the increased usage of *‘āmmiyya* in written genres in Egypt, Rosenbaum (Rosenbaum 2004:281) suggests that *‘āmmiyya* “has become a second written Arabic language (...), in addition to *fuṣḥā*.” Following the debate on language issues in the Egyptian press, Mejdell writes that *‘āmmiyya* is not seen to be as corrupting as it once was considered among Egyptians (Mejdell 2008). In his study of contemporary print media in Morocco, Elinson (Elinson 2012:726) argues that a similar situation obtains there. According to him, writing in *dārīja* (the Moroccan Arabic vernacular) “runs the gamut of genres, themes, and styles of writing.” Several chapters in this book add more documentation of this trend across genres, media and the analog-digital divide. Crossing into the written domains of the public political sphere is, however, a step remaining to be taken. But – lo and behold: in an unprecedented development, which sparked some controversy, the Tunisian NGO *Association Tunisienne de Droit Constitutionnel* published the 2014 Tunisian Constitution in the Tunisian vernacular, arguing that in the name of democracy, it wanted to make the text understandable to as many Tunisians as possible (al-Chorouk 2014). Equally controversial is the recent publication (2016) of the famous classical epistle *Risālat al-ghufrān* by the great poet-philosopher Abū l-‘Alā’ al-Ma‘arrī (d. 1057) translated into Egyptian *‘āmmiyya* by Nārimān al-Shāmīlī, similarly motivated by the need to make the cultural heritage accessible to people with little or no competence in *fuṣḥā*.

Diglossia

The developments traced above raise the question of the status of ‘diglossia’ in Arabic, generally regarded as *the* central issue in Arabic sociolinguistics. In his 1959 article, Charles Ferguson formulated the famous definition that is still the point of departure for any study on diglossia:

DIGLOSSIA is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation.

FERGUSON 1959:336

Arabic is often considered the paradigmatic case of diglossia. The (H)igh variety, *fushā*, diverges from the (L)ow variety, the spoken vernaculars, or dialects, in terms of phonology, morphology, syntax and lexicon, but they are closely related, and considered by speakers to be varieties of one language, not separate languages. The H variety is indeed the vehicle of a large and respected body of literature and not least the sacred language of the Qur'an. It is nobody's mother tongue, but acquired at school, and is used for most written and for formal spoken purposes.

It is an interesting fact that Ferguson developed the idea of diglossia from looking at 'popular political magazines', where he noticed that the texts were in the H variety, while the text accompanying the political cartoons were in the L variety across languages and cultures (Ferguson 1991:54).

Diglossia is likely to emerge when three conditions hold in a speech community, says Ferguson (1959:338): 1) a "sizable body of literature in a language closely related to [...] the natural language of the community", 2) "[l]iteracy in the community is limited to a small elite", and 3) "[a] suitable period of time, on the order of several centuries, passes from the establishment of 1) and 2)". This is supported by Florian Coulmas, in his recent book on writing and society (Coulmas 2013): "[i]n the final analysis, diglossia is an outgrowth of the introduction of writing into human communication. It is not a necessary consequence of writing and literacy, but a factual one" (ibid.:57). His point of departure is Kloss's concepts of *abstand* and *ausbau* languages. An *ausbau* language has been shaped or reshaped "in order to become a standardized tool of literary expression" (cited in ibid.:53). Afrikaans, split from Dutch in this way, is one example. Coulmas builds on this to argue that when *ausbau* languages coexist with a pre-existent vernacular variety and there is a "clear division of functional domains", we have diglossia. But he is very clear that diglossia is a "historically contingent artefact" that is strongly associated with writing (ibid.:55). For him, diglossia comes and goes even though it may become part of the linguistic culture for a long time.

Another claim by Ferguson is that “[d]iglossia seems to be accepted and not regarded as a ‘problem’ by the community [...] until certain trends appear” (1959:338.) These may involve “more widespread literacy”; “broader communication among different regional and social segments of the community” – and Ferguson suggests that these trends will lead to calls for “unification of the language” (ibid.). Actually, we are today at a stage where “widespread literacy” and “broader communication” are developments which are characteristic of the Arab communities in focus in our book – to an extent inconceivable in Ferguson’s time.

As Ferguson developed his concept more than five decades ago (building on ‘la diglossie arabe’ (Marçais 1930/31)), and on earlier studies on Greek (e.g. Krumbacher 1904), and as language situations are dynamic and subject to change, both theoretical and empirical developments in the field since 1959 must be considered to put the present volume in a scholarly context.

Diglossia has generally been regarded as a relatively stable situation – a view that is challenged by several of the chapters in this book. Hudson (2002:8) argues that the functional protection of L as the native language in a diglossic system makes for stability, as the H variety is restricted to certain functions and will not marginalise the colloquial. *If* stability is upset, one would expect either that there is a shift from H to L in formal domains of interaction, or that a new L standard emerges at the expense of the H variety (Hudson 2002:8). However, diglossia is far from representing a black-and-white picture. Even Ferguson’s model allowed for ‘intermediate forms of the language’, and later contributions sought to explore the ‘diglossic continuum’. One early and classic statement was Badawi (1973), who defined five ‘levels’ of spoken Arabic in Egypt, ranging from more or less ‘pure’ *fushḥā* to illiterate colloquial, gradually shading from one level to the next, as the colours of the rainbow. His mid-level, *‘āmmiyyat al-muthaqqafīn* “the spoken variety of the cultured/well educated/intellectuals” was described as a level where standard and vernacular variants are combined with nearly equal distribution. Others have designed alternative models of more or less distinct levels and/or intermediate and mixed varieties, most notably ‘Educated Spoken Arabic’ (Mitchell 1986), ‘Triglossia’ (Youssi 2009), ‘mixed styles’ (Mejdell 2006a). Another approach is to analyse mixed varieties in terms of code-switching between H and L (for application of code-switching methods to Arabic diglossic mixing, see Eid 1988, Boussofara-Omar 2006, Bassiouney 2006).

One may also rethink the term in other ways. Commenting on the mixed forms of spoken discourse reported not only in the Arabic context, but in all the language communities which have been classified as ‘diglossic’, Mejdell

argues that “[t]he interplay between the [H and L] varieties and ‘the intermediate forms of the language’ should become part of the definition of diglossia itself” (Mejdell 2012:19). Boussofara-Omar argues for a “reconceptualization” of diglossia that is focused not on notions of clash or intrusion but on the “complex patterns and configurations of use that arise out of their [H and L] coexistence” (Boussofara-Omar 2006:635). What such contributions argue is in effect that diglossia should be viewed less in terms of a ‘problem’ and more in terms of a ‘resource’ for speakers/writers. Many observers, Arab and non-Arab, have suggested that diglossia complicates language learning and leads to various kinds of language anxiety. Boussofara-Omar argues that instead of viewing the relationship between *fuṣḥā* and the various dialects as a conflictual one, we should think of it as dynamic: the choice of code, when to mix and alternate are *sets of practices* that language users can draw on for various rhetorical and social ends (Boussofara-Omar 2006).

Considering diglossia a resource gains in analytic attraction in a situation where more and more people take to writing: the strategic use of *‘āmmiyya* is highlighted by several of the contributions here (e.g., Elinson; Høigilt; Håland; and Nordenson). Rosenbaum’s notion of “*fuṣḥāmmiyya*”, mentioned above, suggests that similar dynamics of interaction are at play also in the written domain, traditionally regarded as the privileged site for *fuṣḥā*. What we attempt in this book is to take that idea seriously, arguing and documenting that mixing and alternation between codes is a common feature also of written discourse.

That features of standard and dialectal varieties are being combined in written sources has long been documented, and mixing to varying degrees is found in manuscripts from early medieval to modern times. The field of Middle Arabic studies, traditionally concerned with medieval and early and late premodern texts, has opened up to include research on modern non-standard language. What we see is a historical continuity of writing in *fuṣḥā*, in substandard, mixed and colloquial styles. Consequently, one may argue that ‘diglossia’ is best conceived of as a construction of language ideology, rather than as a description of an actual language situation (see Brustad this volume).

Standardisation and Standard Language

The term (Modern) Standard Arabic has become the common (standard!) label in Anglophone research for contemporary *‘arabiyya* or *fuṣḥā*. Standard Arabic is the only (officially recognised) codified variety, and the codification and standardisation of its grammar go back to the early centuries of Islam (Brustad,

Mejdell this volume). Largely because of the close connection between the codified norm and the language of the Qur'ān in the minds of the people, Arab linguistic culture is conservative, and the core grammatical structure of the standard has remained practically unchanged.

Whether in terms of a norm-theoretical approach, or in 'Ausbau' sociolinguistics, a chain of closely related dialects – together with the 'standard dialect' – constitute one language, precisely because the speakers of these dialects recognise the standard as their common standard. Thus, the chain of Arabic 'dialect' varieties across the Mashreq and Maghreb, belong to one 'language', Arabic, because speakers of these varieties recognise standard Arabic (*fuṣḥā*) as their common standard. Whereas Maltese is considered a separate 'language', because a variety of the Maltese vernacular/dialect was codified and is used as a national standard language (for a discussion, see Mejdell 2006b)

One may discern two main trends in standardisation theory: one is concerned with contrastive studies of language planning and language ecology, comparing processes of codification, elaboration and acceptability/validity of the standard, as elaborated by Haugen, Garvin and Trudgill. The other is concerned with issues of language ideology, hegemony and power (will be discussed in the next section) while both perspectives are varied and may overlap, of course.

The notion of the standard being a 'norm of correctness' and a unifying medium of communication across the language community, implies a large degree of uniformity, as against the diversity of the dialects. In modern Europe, typically, the spoken variety of the urban educated social class, was chosen as the linguistic base for codifying the national standard. In Arabic, as well as in the cases of Czech and Greek, a 'high' variety with cultural prestige, not a contemporary spoken variety, was chosen as the base. In German-speaking Switzerland 'high' German was used for written and formal functions, not an educated version of Swiss German. All these language communities are considered 'diglossic'.

The classic dilemma in standard language planning (and maintenance) is how to combine the goals of "minimal variation in form" with "maximal variation in function" (Haugen 1966). In other words, the norms of the standard must be flexible enough "to accommodate the modifications required by the cultural changes and the developments that occur in the speech community" (Garvin 1993:43). The ideal, flexible standard language has developed stylistic layers, formal styles as well as less formal styles, for a range of different domains and functions. In communities with diglossia, however, the standard (H) does not have informal styles, which are served by the vernaculars (L). While standard languages in most European societies typically tend to take over and extend it

domains of use at the expense of local varieties, in diglossic situations the L varieties seem to take over domains and functions of the H standard, with vernacular – and various mixed – practices spreading into most *spoken* domains (media, political debates, classrooms). For Arabic, linguistic conservatism and anxiety concerning the (in)correct use of the H (*fuṣḥā*) variety, is certainly a strong motivating factor behind the practice of turning to vernacular and/or mixed styles – even in writing, as has been observed in history (Middle Arabic texts), and very much so in contemporary writing.

However, we believe that there are wider, perhaps universal, trends affecting language use in the last decades, in spoken as well as written language. Sociologists refer to ‘the late modern age’ as “a time of undermining of the power of authority” (Coupland and Kristiansen 2011:27). In language this trend manifests itself as ‘destandardisation’: “a development whereby the established standard language loses its position as the one and only ‘best language’” (ibid.: 28) and norms of correctness are challenged.

Language Ideology

Developments in the language situation notwithstanding, the fact remains that *al-‘arabiyya al-fuṣḥā* is the only officially recognized codified variety of Arabic (there exist outstanding descriptive grammars of local and regional vernaculars, such as Woidich 2006 for Egyptian (Cairene) Arabic, which amounts to a codification of this variety), and common perceptions of it are based on an ideal type, represented in the cultural imagination by the language of the Qur’an. This standard has been expounded upon by a vast body of treatises on language from the seventh century AD onwards, and remains the exemplary model for the contemporary written language, which is found in official statements, the language of news and academia, and most literature. In the late 19th century, Arab nationalism emerged alongside Islam to justify the perceived supremacy of *fuṣḥā* over Arab dialects. Pan-Arab ideologues defined belonging to the Arab nation in linguistic terms, and this is a potent symbolic tool, since, allowing for stylistic and rhetorical variation, *fuṣḥā* has been the code for written language and formal speech for centuries and functions as a unifying factor across the Arab world. The dual framework of Islam and nationalism has served to reinforce the symbolic importance of *fuṣḥā*, and it is a truism that Arabs today regard *fuṣḥā* as the “real” Arabic language, while the various Arabic vernaculars are seen as greater or lesser distortions of the ideal. In a recent entry on language attitudes in the standard reference work *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, Walters writes that “the language itself

[i.e. fusha] has become linked to Islam in ways that many believers, especially Arab believers, experience as essentialist.” (Walters, 2007:654) As for the link with Arab nationalism, Suleiman writes that “[f]ormulations of Arab nationalism (...) are invariably built around the potential and capacity of Arabic in its standard form to act as the linchpin of the identity of all those who share it as their common language” (Y. Suleiman, 2003:224). Elsewhere, Suleiman states that writing in *‘āmmiyya* is “resisted because it breaks with what is in effect a ‘cultural taboo’ whose ideological validity is sanctioned by tradition and historical practice” (Yasir Suleiman, 2004:72).

These normative underpinnings of *fushā* arguably amount to a case of standard language ideology, as described by Milroy & Milroy:

The standard ideology is promoted through public channels: in the past, standardisation has first affected the writing system, and literacy has subsequently become the main influence in promoting the consciousness of the standard ideology. (...) [T]here is a general belief that there is only one form of correct, i.e. legitimate, English, and a feeling that colloquial and non-standard forms are perverse and deliberate deviations from what is approved by ‘law’; i.e. they are ‘illegitimate’.

MILROY & MILROY, 1999:30

In a later contribution to the standard language theory, Susan Gal states that in standard language cultures, “linguistic variation is visualized – by ordinary speakers and often by linguists too – as an abstract space in which the standard ‘covers’ other varieties, is superimposed on them, and therefore imagined to be located ‘above’ them.” (Gal, 2010:38) This is an image that fits the Arabic language situation well, since native speakers from the various Arab countries often place the Arabic dialects on a hierarchical ladder where the dialects that they consider to be closest to *fushā* are on the top rung (this will often be their own dialect), but *fushā* is always above them all.

In line with such reasoning, John Eisele has identified what he calls a “dominant regime of authority” in discourse about language in the Arab world, characterized by four central themes: unity, purity, continuity and competition (Eisele, 2003:49–50). According to this regime, Arabic unites all Arabs and should therefore be a single language for a single culture; it is in competition with foreign cultures and languages and needs to be protected from contamination by them and also by Arabic dialects, which represent corruptions of the norm; and for unity and purity to be achieved, it is necessary to preserve the classical linguistic system. These values and views are regularly repeated by Arab language authorities, such as representatives of the Egyptian Language

Academy and intellectuals (see, for example, Hanafi, 2013; “Meeting with Dr. Hasan al-Shafi’i,” 2012). They also inform reformist endeavours, as can be seen from the Arab Human Development Reports. The 2003 Report calls for linguistic research and making of new dictionaries “incorporating words common to both colloquial and classical Arabic”, besides “the gradual simplification and rationalisation of grammar leading to a median language [*lughā wusṭā* in the Arabic version] that neither lapses into the colloquial nor replicates the rigid old structures that are difficult to use” (UNDP 2003:125). On the next page, however, the Arabic language [to be understood here as *fuṣḥā*] is the main pillar of Arab solidarity, national unification and Arab cultural unity. Arabic is the bulwark against fragmentation emanating from “‘Information Age Orientalists’ who defend the multiplicity of Arabic dialects” (ibid.:126).

From these comments it is clear that language ideology – understood as “the situated, partial, and interested character of conceptions and uses of language” (Errington 1999:115) – is central to the phenomenon of diglossia. However, this perspective also introduces the potential for agent-driven change. As Paul Kroskrity reminds us, language ideologies may not only be approached as structured, cultural systems; they may also be seen in terms of speakers’ awareness and their agency (Kroskrity 2004:497). It is the latter approach that we by and large adopt in this volume. The interesting result of focusing on agents rather than structure is, first, that a picture emerges where the attitudes and practices relating to the written language prove to be less monolithic than what is commonly assumed – one need only a quick glance at Kindt’s and Kebede’s presentation of the survey results in chapter one to see that this is the case. Second, it opens the possibility of interpreting the fundamental notion of diglossia not as an objective description of the language situation but as a language ideological construction with a very long pedigree. Third, it encourages us to acknowledge the existence of multiple language ideologies coexisting within different communities of practice – implying, of course, the possibility that today’s less dominant ideology may become tomorrow’s orthodoxy. Let us briefly expand on these points.

Despite at times heavy language policing past and present (E.g., Carter 1983:72) the widespread notion that *‘ammīyya* is not a written language is not an accurate one. The identification of a pre-modern written register called Middle Arabic, which exhibited several dialectal features (Lentin 2008, 2012), as well as the excavation of a large number of texts written in some form of dialectal Egyptian Arabic (Doss and Davies 2013) suggest that mixed forms of writing have proliferated in Arabic through history. Writing in dialect was in some respects quite popular at the beginning of the 20th century in Egypt (Fahmy 2011); however, the purist literary culture that accompanied the Arab renaiss-

sance (*nahḍa*) largely erased this part of the Arab literary heritage, reinforcing a linguistic orthodoxy in which there was little acceptance for written dialect.

This dominant standard ideology of Arabic, described above, is challenged by recent writing practices that revive the practice of writing in dialect, or at least a variety that cannot easily be defined as *fushḥā*. This development has been noted recently, but not analysed in a systematic fashion (Holes 2013:293–296). Several chapters in this book document a number of contemporary cases of unapologetic writing in dialect, across countries and the digital/print divide: From Moroccan *zajal*, via Egyptian ‘sarcastic literature’ and youth magazines, to Kuwaiti political blogs. Writing in *‘ammīyya* is also surprisingly widespread on the popular level. The literate populations of Cairo and Rabat/Salé report writing in *‘ammīyya* more often than in *fushḥā*, and more than 50 percent of the respondents in both locations report writing in *‘ammīyya* every day (Kindt and Kebede this volume, Kindt, Høigilt and Kebede forthcoming). While *‘ammīyya* certainly cannot be seen as the dominant written variety by any account, the amount of writing in dialect that goes on in several Arab countries these days justifies talk of a cultural phenomenon of some significance. Just how significant it is we leave for the future to answer. In this volume we are content to describe a number of cases and try to make sense of them.

Based on both contemporary and historical samples of writing, Brustad in this volume shows that it is conceivable to radically change our perspective on diglossia itself. Rather than taking it for granted as a structural linguistic fact, she argues that diglossia was engineered by a religious and cultural elite as a way of consolidating symbolic power. Diglossia and the standard language ideology that undergirds it evolved alongside one another rather than the latter being an epiphenomenon of the former. Brustad’s analysis brings to mind Coulmas’s recent assertion that diglossia is a “historically contingent artefact” that is strongly associated with writing (Coulmas 2013:55).

While the standard language ideology associated with diglossia is by definition dominant in the Arab world today, this does not mean that it is the only language ideology worth considering. We may expect there to be other ideologies corresponding to various social divisions (along class, ethnic, generational etc. lines) that are not dominant but contribute to shaping the linguistic landscape in Arab countries today. These may be explicit or implicit. A clear example of the former is studied in detail by Aboelezz in this volume. This would constitute what has in the Swiss diglossic context been called an “ideology of dialect”, whereby the “symbolic value of the dialect in the majority of linguistic marketplaces in which they are in competition with the standard is not only believed to be much higher than that of the standard but is also deliberately promoted as having a higher value” (Watts 2010:69).

However, also when people subscribe to the dominant view that *fushā* carries more cultural prestige than *‘ammiyya*, this does not hinder them from employing *‘ammiyya* in the domain of writing. Here other determinants of ideology, such as identity and authenticity, enter the picture. The ambiguity towards the varieties sometimes expressed by Arabs have been viewed as symptoms of language anxiety, connected to literacy problems. However, it seems that for writers who employ both varieties diglossia is a literacy resource rather than a problem, a tool they can harness to express different identities. Finally, the choice of *‘ammiyya* as a written variety may be part of a consciously anti-elitist, oppositional language ideology, as in the case of the Egyptian comics studied by Høigilt in this volume.

Structure of the Book

We have taken care to make the scope of this book as wide as possible without losing focus on the main questions: diglossia, language ideology and the relations between the social and the linguistic. In chapter one, Kristian Takvam Kindt and Tewodros Aragie Kebede provide a broad empirical background for the rest of the book by presenting and analysing the findings from two large-scale surveys on language attitudes and practices carried out in Greater Cairo and Rabat/Salé in 2013 and 2015, respectively. To our knowledge, this is the first time that language attitudes and practices in Arab populations have been gathered on the scale of whole cities. Onto this empirical canvas Gunvor Mejdell and Kristen Brustad add two conceptual chapters that propose theoretical frameworks for dealing with writing practices and language policies in the Arab world, past and present. These two chapters are designed to be the theoretical and conceptual focal points of the book.

Kristen Brustad draws on Milroy and Milroy's notion of a standard language ideology to argue in chapter two that diglossia should be approached as an ideology rather than a linguistic description. This ideology reached its zenith in the 20th century, as its gatekeepers came to condemn what they declared to be "non-standard" forms, and the ideology of diglossia spread. Arabic standard language ideology promoted the search for "correct" *fushā*, often interpreted to mean the form most distant from colloquial. At the same time however, the democratising effects of access to publishing and participating in public discourse have opened new writing spaces. From these spaces a very different ideology seems to be evolving, one that does not see Arabic as a diglossic zero-sum game, causing the ideology of diglossia to lose ground. In chapter three, Gunvor Mejdell draws up the historical canvas, arguing that *norms* for writ-

ten language and *practices* of writing are not necessarily overlapping. She cites evidence that the current crossing of boundaries between the diglossic varieties and disregard of standard norms of correctness are not new phenomena. Rather, the conceptualisation of two distinct and opposing entities, *fuṣḥā* vs. *‘āmmiyya*, developed in the *nahḍa* period. This did not mean that Arab philologists and language ideologues had ignored the dialects, but these were thought of in terms of deviation from the standard, *al-‘arabiyya al-fuṣḥā*, rather than as autonomous entities.

The following chapters are case studies written in the spirit of the two conceptual chapters that precede them. The case studies focus on Egypt and Morocco, with a detour to digital writing in Kuwait, one of the Arab world's most online societies. First comes a section of fairly broad overviews of the dialectal writing in Morocco and Egypt. In chapter four, Catherine Miller presents a short history of *dārīja* publications in Morocco by recalling the main actors and domains. She then focuses on a key issue of writing in non-standard languages: the degree of relationship with the standard language through orthographic and stylistic choices. In short, what do people write when they claim to write *dārīja*? This question is illuminated by an analysis of some recent theatrical texts. In chapter five, Dominique Caubet zooms in on the grassroots developments conducive to *dārīja*'s (restricted) emergence in writing in the early 2000's: the first dramatic change in the status of the Moroccan dialect was the non-institutional language planning it underwent, in the form of a spontaneous passage to writing – first on keyboards (cell phones and later on computers) – via different social networks. In the absence of any institutional support, people taught themselves to read and write *dārīja* fluently in Latin script at first, and more recently in Arabic script, with a true 'do it yourself' spirit. Since then, millions of messages have been written daily for nearly fifteen years, and in 2015, we have entered the era of writing of long prose texts in *dārīja* – mostly on the internet. Caubet terms this development an "informal passage to literacy."

Moving on to the case of Egypt, in chapter six Eva Marie Håland presents and analyses the phenomenon of satirical literature, or *adab sākhir*. Håland traces the emergence of this genre and explains how content, communicative purposes and form relate to each other in these works, which usually contains a lot of Egyptian dialect. The authors of these works are often highly conscious of their linguistic and stylistic choices, and the desire to reach a young audience in a humorous idiom plays an important role when choosing and mixing language varieties.

Håland's treatment of the genre of satirical literature provides a bridge to two chapters about less well-known media and genres. Staying in Egypt, Jacob

Høigilt explores the language and content of contemporary adult comics and glossy magazines in chapter seven. Many of the texts in these media are written in the vernacular (*‘āmmiyya*) or in mixed styles, and in Høigilt’s chapter, the functions of combinations of content and language code in two specific publications are studied in detail, resulting in three conclusions. First, they represent marginalised groups in Egyptian society; second, they contribute to an informal style that is apparent also in other late-modern contexts; and third, they open up a ‘third space’ that allows writers to criticize the norms of the mainstream culture without alienating themselves from it. Returning to Morocco, Alexander Elinson investigates the tension between standard and non-standard from the vantage point of *zajal* poetry in chapter eight. In contrast to those who wish to preserve Standard Arabic’s status as the ‘official’ language of education, official contexts, and writing, Moroccan *zajal* poets approach the debate from a different angle. In the world of the *zajal* poetic form, *dārīja* is celebrated and revered. Elinson argues that as the writing and publication of *zajal* poetry increases, *zajal* poets in Morocco, working in *dārīja* that is both oral and written, are forming an ideological community that effectively inserts the *zajal*, written in *dārīja*, into the ‘high’ variety category. Elinson’s argument can probably be connected to Bauman and Brigg’s hypothesis of *vernacularisation*, which involve “a refiguration of the domestic Other through the dual processes that Sheldon Pollock terms *literization*, in which local languages are admitted to literacy, and *literarization*, in which the oral, traditional forms of vernacular expression are accommodated to ‘literature’, worthy of being cultivated, read, and preserved” (Bauman and Briggs 2003:15).

While the above case studies treat language ideology as largely implicit, Mariam Aboelezz (chapter nine) provides a view of explicit, programmatic language ideologies that are visibly associated with political standpoints. She compares the language ideologies of the Egyptian Liberal party and the Malāmīh publishing house – the former an Egyptian nationalist party and the second a liberal, leftist organization. Aboelezz shows that both organisations champion *‘āmmiyya* but for ideologically different reasons. For the politician, *‘āmmiyya* is predictably prodded as a symbol of Egyptian nationalism, whilst *fushā* is constructed as a symbol of (rejected) pan-Arabism. The indexicality of *‘āmmiyya* for Malāmīh’s director is more subtle: It is constructed as a marker of anti-institutional discourse; a form whose mere use challenges the regulatory capacity of the regime. The book closes with a section that focuses exclusively on the digital media.

In chapter ten, Atiqa Hachimi analyses a Moroccan Facebook page originally dedicated to blacklisting Moroccan singers who do not use the Moroccan dialect in television appearances. The page later expanded to include censure

and abuse of celebrities, especially female ones, who were perceived to dress and behave immodestly. Hachimi's chapter shows that ideologies of language, gender, and Moroccan national identity interact on this Facebook page, and she highlights the playfulness of contemporary Arabic online discourse.

The last two chapters move beyond the Moroccan and Egyptian contexts: Jon Nordenson considers the case of Kuwaiti activists' use of blogs and Twitter at important junctures in Kuwaiti political history in chapter eleven. The first was a liberal dominated 2006 campaign to change the electoral law, and the second is the ongoing oppositional movement seeking extensive political reform, dominated by Islamist and tribal protagonists. Building on an original and vast corpus of language samples, Nordenson is able to get the "bigger picture" of language practices by selecting random samples from the two cases. His findings suggest a tendency towards Kuwaiti Arabic (KA) features among the liberal activists in 2006, a tendency towards Standard Arabic (SA) features among the oppositional activists currently active, and an equal distribution between KA and SA features among the "average" Twitter user. Differences in the intended and expected audiences are suggested as the reason behind these findings.

Lastly, in chapter twelve, Emad Abdul Latif explores the comment field of popular Arab YouTube channels, an area of language use that has scarcely been investigated previously. Building on nearly 5,000 written comments on two YouTube versions of the famous debate between 'Amr Mūsā and 'Abd al-Mun'im Abū al-Futūḥ on the eve of the 2012 Egyptian presidential elections, Abdul Latif's contribution tackles the manifestation of aggressive counter-argumentation, i.e. the increasing usage of profanity and taboo language online. The study explores their pragmatic and rhetorical functions and causes.

References

- Abd al-Al, Ghada. 2008. *عايزة أتجوز*. Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq.
- al-Chorouk. 2014. "The Tunisian Constitution in the Tunisian Dialect (in Arabic)." *Al-Chorouk*, April 24. Retrieved March 10, 2016 (http://www.alchourouk.com/48372/567/1/-الدستور_التونسي_بالدارجة_التونسية-.html).
- Bassiouny, Reem. 2006. *Functions of Code Switching in Egypt*. Leiden: Brill 2006.
- Bauman, Richard and Charles S. Briggs. 2003. *Voices of Modernity: Language Ideologies and the Politics of Inequality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Boussofara-Omar, Naima. 2006. "Diglossia." In *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, edited by K. Versteegh et al., vol. 1:629–637.
- Carter, Michael G. 1983. "Language Control as People Control in Medieval Islam: The Aims of the Grammarians in the Cultural Context." *Al-Abhath* 31:65–84.

- Coulmas, Florian. 2013. *Writing and Society: An Introduction*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Coupland, Nikolas and Tore Kristiansen. 2011. "SLICE: Critical perspectives on language (de)standardisation." Pp. 11–35 in *Standard Languages and Language Standards in a Changing Europe*, edited by T. Kristiansen and N. Coupland. Oslo: Novus Press.
- Doss, Madiha. 2006. "Cultural Dynamics and Linguistic Practice in Contemporary Egypt." *Cairo Papers in Social Science* 27(1 & 2):51–68.
- Doss, Madiha and Humphrey Davies. 2013. *العامية المصرية المكتوبة (Written Egyptian Dialect)*. Cairo: The General Egyptian Book Organization.
- Eid, Mushira. 1988. "Principles of code switching between Standard and Egyptian Arabic." *Al-'Arabiyya*, 21:51–79.
- Elinson, Alexander. 2013. "Darija and Changing Writing Practices in Morocco." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45(4):715–730.
- Errington, Joseph. 1999. "Ideology." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 9(1–2):115–117.
- Garvin, Paul L. 1993. "A Conceptual Framework for the Study of Language Standardization." *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 100/101:37–54.
- Fahmy, Ziad. 2011. *Ordinary Egyptians: Creating the Modern Nation through Popular Culture*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
- Ferguson, Charles A. 1959. "Diglossia." *Word* 15(2):325–340.
- Ferguson, Charles A. 1991. "Diglossia Revisited." *Southwest Journal of Linguistics* 10(1): 214–234.
- Haugen, Einar. 1966. "Dialect, Language, Nation." *American Anthropologist* 68:922–935.
- Holes, Clive. 2013. "Orality, Culture, and Language." Pp. 281–300 in *The Oxford handbook of Arabic linguistics*, edited by J. Owens. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hudson, Alan. 2002. "Outline of a Theory of Diglossia." *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 1–48.
- Kroskirty, Paul V. 2004. "Language Ideologies." Pp. 496–517 in *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*, edited by A. Duranti. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Lentin, Jérôme. 2008. "Middle Arabic." in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, edited by K. Versteegh, vol. 3:215–224.
- Lentin, Jérôme. 2012. "Reflections on Middle Arabic." Pp. 32–53 in *High vs. Low and Mixed Varieties: Status, Norms and Functions Across Time and Languages*, edited by G. Mejdell and L. Edzard. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.
- Lillis, Theresa M. 2013. *The Sociolinguistics of Writing*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Mejdell, Gunvor. 2006. "The Use of Colloquial in Modern Egyptian Literature – a Survey." Pp. 195–213 in *Current Issues in the Analysis of Semitic Grammar and Lexicon II*, edited by L. Edzard and J. Retsö. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.
- Mejdell, Gunvor. 2008. "What Is Happening to Lughatunā l-Gamīla? Recent Media

- Representations and Social Practice in Egypt." *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 8:108–124.
- Mejdell, Gunvor. 2012. "'High' and 'Low' Varieties, Diglossia, Language Contact, and Mixing: Social Processes and Linguistic Products in a Comparative Perspective." Pp. 9–24 in *High vs. Low and Mixed Varieties: Status, Norms and Functions Across Time and Languages*, edited by G. Mejdell and L. Edzard. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.
- Mitchell, Timothy F. 1986. "What Is Educated Spoken Arabic?" *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 61(1):7–32.
- Rosenbaum, Gabriel. 2004. "Egyptian Arabic as a Written Language." *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 29:281–340.
- UNDP. 2003. *Arab Human Development Report 2003: Building a Knowledge Society*. Amman: UNDP. Retrieved (<http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdr/ahdr2003e.pdf>).
- UNESCO and Qatar Foundation. 2007. *Literacy Challenges in the Arab Region: Building Partnerships and Promoting Innovative Approaches*. Doha: UNESCO and Qatar Foundation. Retrieved (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001835/183528e.pdf>).
- UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2015. "Regional and Country Profiles." *UNESCO Institute for Statistics*. Retrieved January 6, 2016 (<http://www.uis.unesco.org/DataCentre/Pages/regions.aspx>).
- Walters, Keith. 2003. "Fergies Prescience: The Changing Nature of Diglossia in Tunisia." *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 163:77–109.
- Watts, Richard J. 2010. "The Ideology of Dialect in Switzerland." Pp. 67–104 in *Language, Power and Social Process [LPSP]: Language Ideological Debates*, edited by J. Blommaert. Munchen: Walter de Gruyter. Retrieved April 23, 2014 (<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/alltitles/docDetail.action?docID=10588380>).
- Woidich, Manfred. 2006. *Das Kairenisch-Arabische. Eine Grammatik*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.
- Youssi, Abderrahim. 1983. "La triglossie dans la typologie arabe." *La Linguistique* 19,2: 71–83.